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ABSTRACT

There has been much discussion about increasing the supply and quality of teachers. Education officials are experimenting with teacher salary structures, creating new career steps, career ladders, merit pay schemes, and new positions with greater authority and responsibility in order to attract and retain better teachers. In the past, such experiments have been associated with increases in teachers' salaries. The salary history of teachers since 1960 is detailed. Salary trends include: (1) between 1980 and 1993, average overall teachers salaries increased by 21%; elementary teacher salaries increased by 22%, and secondary teacher salaries increased by 19%; (2) the increase in the 1980s followed a period of decline during the 1970s. Teacher salaries peaked in 1973, then fell to a low in 1981. (3) The average beginning salary for teachers increased 17% between 1980 and 1993, from $20,504 to $23,969; and (4) percentage increases in teacher salaries between 1981 and 1993 ranged from a high of 51% in New England to a low of 9% in the Rocky Mountain states. The following tables are provided: "Average annual salary for public elementary and secondary school teachers: Selected years 1960-93"; "Average annual salaries of public school teachers, percentage increase of salaries between 1981 and 1993, and per capita personal income for 1992, by region", and two figures illustrate "Average annual salary and average beginning salary for public school teachers: Selected school years ending 1960-93" and "Percentage change in public school teacher salaries: 1981-93." (MAS)

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Salaries of Teachers

Indicator of the Month

May 1995

National Center for Education Statistics

IR017138

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INDICATOR OF THE MONTH

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

May 1995

Salaries of teachers

There has been much discussion about increasing the supply and quality of teachers. Education officials are experimenting with teacher salary structures, creating new career steps, career ladders, merit pay schemes, and new positions with greater authority and responsibility in order to attract and retain better teachers. In the past, such experiments have been associated with increases in teachers' salaries.

- **Between 1980 and 1993, average overall teacher salaries, adjusted for inflation, increased by 21 percent, from $29,766 to $35,873; elementary teacher salaries increased by 22 percent, and secondary teacher salaries increased by 19 percent.**
- **The increase in the 1980s followed a period of decline during the 1970s. Teacher salaries peaked in 1973 at $34,390, but lost nearly $5,000 during the decade, falling to a low of $29,473 in 1981. When compared to the earlier peak, teacher salaries have shown an increase only since 1987.**
- **The average beginning salary for teachers increased 17 percent between 1980 and 1993, from $20,504 to $23,969.**
- **Percentage increases in teacher salaries between 1981 and 1993 ranged from a high of 51 percent in New England to a low of 9 percent in the Rocky Mountain states.**

Average annual salary (in constant 1993 dollars) for public elementary and secondary school teachers: Selected years 1960–93

School year ending	All teachers	Elementary teachers	Secondary teachers	Beginning teacher salary*
1960	$24,599	$23,712	$25,983	—
1964	28,127	27,235	29,398	—
1963	31,584	30,669	32,729	—
1972	34,127	33,138	35,273	$24,128
1976	32,876	32,041	33,755	23,104
1980	29,766	29,019	30,678	20,504
1984	31,184	30,547	32,064	21,562
1988	35,017	34,373	35,974	23,938
1992	34,618	34,053	35,421	24,001
1993	35,873	35,308	36,609	23,969

—Not available.
*Beginning teacher salary is for the calendar year.

Average annual salaries of public school teachers, percentage increase of salaries between 1981 and 1993, and per capita personal income for 1992 (in 1993 dollars), by region

Region	All teachers 1980–81	All teachers 1992–93	Percentage increase 1981–93	Per capita personal income (1992)
50 states and D.C.	$29,473	$35,873	21.7	$20,745
New England	26,816	40,527	51.1	24,225
Mideast	32,725	43,625	33.3	24,130
Southeast	25,121	30,089	19.8	20,487
Great Lakes	30,871	38,666	25.3	17,617
Plains	25,533	31,565	23.6	17,376
Southwest	26,824	29,979	11.8	18,347
Rocky Mountains	28,251	30,675	8.6	18,839
Far West	35,619	40,448	13.6	21,891

SOURCE: National Education Association, *Estimates of School Statistics, 1993* (Copyright © 1993 by NEA. All rights reserved). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1993*, table 76; American Federation of Teachers, *Survey and Analysis of Salary Trends 1993*, 1993, Table III-2.

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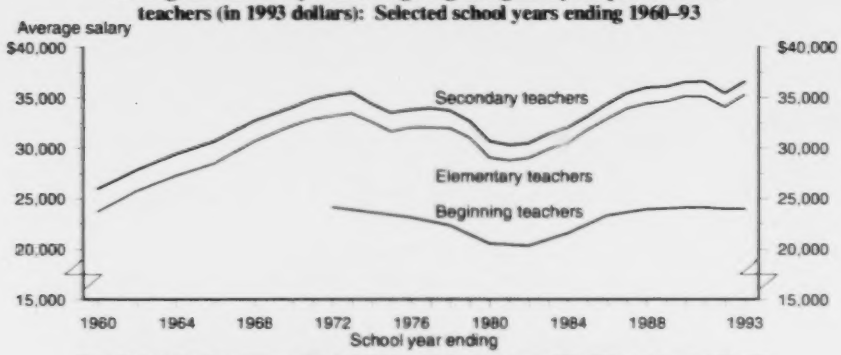
U.S. Department of Education **Office of Educational Research and Improvement**
NCES 95–761

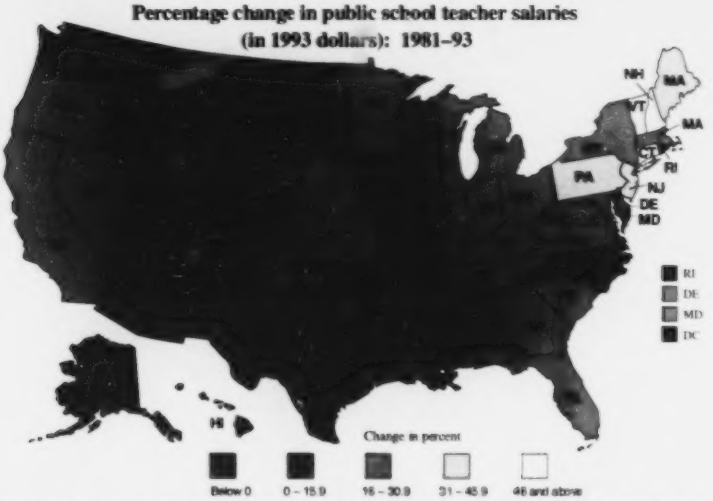
Average salaries of teachers

Average annual salary and average beginning salary for public school teachers (in 1993 dollars): Selected school years ending 1960–93



Note: Plotted points for average annual salary for teachers are: even years 1960–1968, and all years 1970–1993. Plotted points for average beginning salary for teachers are: even years 1972–88 and 1990–93.

Percentage change in public school teacher salaries (in 1993 dollars): 1981–93



SOURCE: National Education Association, *Estimates of School Statistics, 1993* (Copyright © 1993 by NEA. All rights reserved.). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, *Digest of Education Statistics, 1993*, table 76; American American Federation of Teachers, *Survey and Analysis of Salary Trends, 1993*, 1993.

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